

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL UDORN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 115877

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CGEN, PINT, LA, TH

SUBJECT: REQUESTS FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM: LAO POLITICAL
AND MILITARY LEADERS

REFS: A. VIENTIANE 3204, B. STATE 109711, C. VIENTIANE 3217
D. BANGKOK 8712, E. UDORN 120, F. UDORN 119, G. VIENTIANE
3458 (NOTE: REFS A, B AND D ARE NOTAL)

1. DEPT IS WEIGHING QUESTION OF GRANTING POLITICAL ASYLUM
TO CERTAIN KEY VIENTIANE SIDE POLITICAL AND MILITARY
FIGURES. WE HAD HOPED NUMBERS INVOLVED WOULD BE SMALL
ENOUGH SO THAT PROBLEM COULD BE MANAGED ON BASIS OF
INDIVIDUAL PAROLE AUTHORITY. CONSUL UDORN'S MOST RECENT
REPORTS HOWEVER, INDICATE SIZEABLE NUMBERS ARE ALREADY
INVOLVED AND MORE SHOULD BE EXPECTED. THIS INCREASINGLY
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LARGE NUMBER COMPLICATES OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND AFFIRMA-

TIVELY TO THESE REQUESTS. ADDRESSEES SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC REACTIONS HERE WHAT WOULD BE PERCEIVED AS A FLOW OF LAO REFUGEES ON TOP OF THE STILL UNDIGESTED INFLUX OF VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN REFUGEES. THE FACT THAT THE SANANIKONES WOULD BE IN THE VAN WOULD DOUBTLESS NOT GO UNNOTICED BY THE JOURNALISTS.

2. UNTIL DEPT. CAN ISSUE INSTRUCTIONS ON HANDLING OF THESE CASES, ADDRESSEES SHOULD INFORM APPLICANTS FOR ASYLUM THAT WE WILL CONSIDER THEIR REQUESTS WHICH REQUIRE WASHINGTON DETERMINATION ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. NO BLANKET AUTHORITY NOW EXISTS FOR BRINGING IN LARGE NUMBERS OF LAO OUTSIDE THE NORMAL IMMIGRATION PROCESS.

FOR UDORN: DEPT PREFERS CONSUL URGE GEN KHAMHOU AND COL ARYA FIND OTHER QUARTERS. IF THEY ARE IN GENUINE DANGER, THEY SHOULD RELY ON RTG POLICE PROTECTION. CONSUL SHOULD, HOWEVER, LEAVE QUESTION OF GOING TO RTG FOR HELP TO THE LAO THEMSELVES. FYI: WE BELIEVE THAT GIVING SHELTER TO LAO REFUGEES WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES IN POSSIBLE RPT POSSIBLE DANGER COULD PLACE US IN POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING POSITION RE THAI-LAO RELATIONS, WHICH IN TURN COULD EFFECT THAI-USG RELATIONS. IT ALSO PLACES RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY OF LAO IN THAILAND ON US SHOULDERS WHICH COULD PROVE IMPOSSIBLE TO FULFILL. END FYI.

4. WE ARE UNAWARE IF NGON SANANIKONE HAS AGAIN RAISED CASH SUBSIDY HE SUGGESTED TO CHARGE VIENTIANE. HOWEVER, IF HE OR ANY OTHER LAO SHOULD DO SO, THEY SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE UNDER US LAW. FURTHERMORE, IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR TO ASYLUM SEEKERS THAT, ASIDE FROM POSSIBLY GRANTING ASYLUM ANY ASSISTANCE GIVEN IS VERY MODEST, CONSISTING LARGELY IN RESETTLEMENT HELP BUT NO RPT NO CASH. FYI: OF INTEREST TO US AND OF HELP IN DETERMINING NECESSITY AND/OR ABILITY TO ASSIST LAO ASYLUM SEEKERS WOULD BE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCIAL STATUS OF APPLICANTS. WE NOTE IN REFTEL G THAT SOUVANNA HAS MOST EX-LAO LEADERS RESIDING BANGKOK'S ERAWAN HOTEL WHICH WOULD SEEM INDICATE THEY HAVE SOME CONFIDENTIAL

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FUNDS. FROM REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM, THUS FAR IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER APPLICANTS ARE MERELY REQUESTING ASYLUM OR WHETHER THEY REQUIRE FINANCIAL HELP AS WELL TO REACH US AND RESETTLE. END FYI. KISSINGER

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